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ABSTRACT

This booklet was developed to offer practical advice to those in charge of, or attempting to develop, a small literacy program. The guide is organized in nine narrative sections that provide information on the following topics: beginning a literacy program, assessing the need, program structure, building a program, financing a program, recruitment, promotion, training of volunteer tutors, and "horizons" (perspective on adult literacy programs). A bibliography and sample forms complete the booklet. (The guide is based on the experiences of the author as a director of literacy services and a trainer of tutors in Pennsylvania.) (KC)

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BEGINNING A LITERACY PROGRAM

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Nancy Woods is the director of Adult Literacy Action, a complete literacy services program operated by the Pennsylvania State University. She is also an instructor in the College of Education and the Field Lab Coordinator for the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy. Laubach Literacy Action credits Woods as a master tutor and master supervising trainer. She has served as director of Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth and supervisor of the VISTA / Literacy Program of Pennsylvania.

BEGINNING A LITERACY PROGRAM

Increasing numbers of volunteers are responding to the invitation to "teach someone to read." The response is indicative of a heightened awareness of, and interest in, the problem of adult illiteracy, and many new community literacy programs are starting as a result. This booklet will offer some practical advice to those in charge of, or attempting to develop, a small literacy program.

Illiteracy is rarely at the top of any list of social concerns, yet it is related to some of this country's very worst problems. Adults who cannot complete job applications, read job requirements or follow written instructions may well be unemployed. Someone who cannot read faces daily frustration which may lead to emotional problems. Future generations are touched when parents who are illiterate cannot help their children; the same parents may even pass on to their children the attitude that education is not important.

Clearly, by "teaching someone to read," a literacy program, no matter how small, is doing much, much more.

ASSESSING THE NEED

Step one for anyone setting up a literacy program is to be informed both about illiteracy nationally and about the community's own problems, and then to see how current literacy programs are meeting the community's needs. Experience shows that it is usually better to cooperate with and improve existing programs in the community than it is to launch a totally new program.

Illiteracy has traditionally been difficult to define, and even more difficult to measure. But, in any community, several local agencies will probably be aware of both the literacy problem and current programs that address it. Those agencies may include the Intermediate Unit or superintendent of schools, the continuing education department of the local community college or university, United Way, the public library, area vocational-technical (vo-tech) schools, the local office of health and human services, the Private Industry Council (PIC), and the local office of employment services (JTPA). In addition, the State Department of Education's Division of Adult Basic Education (ABE) should have a breakdown by county of many of the background statistics needed to establish accurate data.

Asking the following questions will help you define the problem in your own community. The most likely source of answers to each question is also listed here:

From the 1980 census study, available from the State Census Bureau...

- What is the adult population 17 years old and over?
- What is the non-white population?
- How many adults 25 years old and over have not completed high school?
What numbers completed 0-8 years of education, and what numbers completed 9-11 years of education?

From the State Office of Employment Security ...

- What is the size of the potential civilian workforce? How many are unemployed? What is the rate of unemployment by county? How does it compare to the rest of the country?

From the State Welfare Department ...

- What is the average number of persons receiving cash assistance annually?

From the State Department of Education's Division of Adult Basic Education ...

- What are ABE and General Education Development (GED) enrollments by county? What percentage of literacy programs statewide receives Department of Education (DOE) funds? How do you find existing programs not receiving DOE funds?

From the superintendent of schools ...

- What is the number of high school dropouts in your district?

From the nearest PIC...

- Since PICs administer funds for the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and since it is mandated that 8% of those funds be applied to literacy programs, the local PIC will probably have many relevant statistics, particularly as they apply to the workforce.

Most of the adults your program will serve are of at least average intelligence; they should have learned to read, but did not, in the traditional education system. Some literacy programs are also able to work with special populations, in which case the following information may be helpful:

From the local office supervising citizenship activity (check with your city hall or county courthouse) ...

- The number of foreign-born citizens registered in the county who may be interested in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs or citizenship preparation classes.

From the local Mental Health/Mental Retardation office...

- The number of adults in MH/MR programs who might be eligible for adult basic education programs.

From the local jail, prison and probation office...

- The number of adults lacking adequate reading skills who might be referred to a literacy program.

Patterns which show high percentages in key risk areas—for instance, adults who did not complete high school, welfare recipients, the unemployed, the non-white population and non-English-speaking adults—may reflect a major literacy problem.

In addition, before proceeding to begin a new program, you are wise to ask these questions:

- Is there a GED program available which could use a basic skills component? If so, try to establish a program that could cooperate with that GED program.
- Are there existing programs which a new effort could help support?

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The best foundation for a literacy effort is a written answer, carefully thought out, to this question: *Exactly what do you want your literacy program to do?* The answer is the cornerstone, the mission statement, of the program. Components of the answer should include what the target population is, how many are in that population and how the program will deal with it.

For example:

(NAME OF PROGRAM) will train literacy tutors for adults reading below the fourth-grade level in (NAME) County. In the first year, the program will recruit (NUMBER) volunteers and (NUMBER) students.

The more a beginning program involves others in the community, the better its chances of success. It then becomes "our program," rather than "your program." Organizing an advisory board is one proven way to coordinate a community effort. Individual members of the board should have expertise in planning, budgeting, education or community relations. It is important to have all geographic areas and key community groups represented on the advisory board.

Allocate among the advisory group responsibilities for specific areas of the program. The program's size and finances will determine whether one person handles all duties, or whether there must be a larger staff. As the advisors make decisions about structure, they should consider the following categories:

Administration/strategic planning: The project director and the board must constantly work together to set both short- and long-range plans, and to project and chart the literacy program's progress. For instance:

By the first quarter of 1988, we want to have X students, Y tutors and volunteers, and Z operating budget.

One early duty of the administration will be to find sites for the program. Its most important responsibility thereafter will be communications: to prevent the

program from fragmenting, it is necessary to keep tutors, trainers, students and staff informed about each other's activities and how they fit together in the overall plan, and to give recognition to the efforts of key people.

Outreach: Press contacts and student/tutor recruitment can all fall into this department. A student-tutor coordinator should be named to keep accurate records and to match students with tutors. This department could establish and run a speakers bureau to build public awareness about illiteracy in general and about your literacy program's effort in particular, and it should keep the media apprised of your efforts and progress. One, and only one, person should be designated to coordinate media involvement to avoid confusion or duplication of requests.

Finance: This committee or department develops a budget draft and looks into sources of funding. One important source of funding is in-kind contributions—donated space, telephones, equipment, secretarial services, professional services, etc. In addition to demonstrating tangible support of your program, these contributions may be acceptable as matching funds for grant proposals.

Training: This segment of the program must be responsible for training tutors and staff, selecting appropriate materials and techniques, and developing training teams.

Curriculum development: Once a program curriculum has been chosen, it is important to review materials for supplemental reading. Retired teachers and other professional educators may be of great assistance. Using readability scans (Consult your local library for an appropriate formula.) this staff or volunteer group can build lists of supplemental books at given reading levels. Bookstores and libraries could set

these books out on "easy reading" tables and shelves for students to choose.

Secretarial/clerical service: It is easy to underestimate the importance of this department—but to do so is a mistake. A good secretarial service efficiently handles recordkeeping, phone calls and correspondence, and supports the work of both staff and volunteers. Any community program must provide competent office support to stay effective.

BUILDING A PROGRAM

Job Descriptions

Most beginning literacy programs will be staffed largely by volunteers, and for the sake of both consistency and efficiency, it is important to develop job descriptions for them. The job descriptions should be specific about the time you will require of each type of volunteer. For example:

To be a tutor for the (NAME OF PROGRAM) you must know how to read and write, and care enough to help someone else learn. You must be willing to complete 12 hours of training, at the end of which you will be matched with an adult student who has requested help improving basic literacy skills. You will be expected to meet with the student a minimum of 3 hours a week at a local site to be agreed upon. Approximate duration of assignment: one year, or the time it takes to help one student complete the program.

Volunteers may serve in many other capacities in addition to tutoring. They might, for instance, participate in grantwriting, fund development, community outreach or office administration. (A written job description is important for these assignments as well.)

Tutoring Sites

Public buildings with private space available are the optimum tutoring sites because they offer a professional atmosphere in an easily accessible building. There are many site options, including:

- Local churches
- Libraries
- American Legion posts
- Union halls
- Fire halls
- Community centers
- Public schools
- Granges
- Homes

- Colleges and universities
- Community rooms of public buildings

Site coordinators must be sensitive to the dynamics of the location and its staff. In a local church, for example, it may be best to plan tutoring sessions to correspond to times when the church is normally open, to avoid placing extra work on the ministerial or building staff. At all locations, the staff should be kept informed of your class schedule, and the tutors should know whom to contact if problems occur.

Curriculum

There are several adult basic education curricula available: the local library or the State Department of Education may be able to review them for you. Deciding on a curriculum is another opportunity to draw in others from the community. Invite a college reading specialist, or other knowledgeable individuals, to evaluate the materials you are considering. Ask others in the community who are already using the program to critique it for you.

The goal of a literacy program is to teach and improve basic reading and writing skills, and in many cases, math skills. A literacy program has a three-part purpose: To introduce basic skills, to reinforce and review those skills, and to consistently build new skills that increase the student's literacy level.

A successful curriculum will feature some of the following:

- A training system for volunteer tutors
- Materials that are geared to the interest and capability of adults
- Guidelines for establishing readability levels
- A method that introduces new skills gradually while continuously reinforcing skills that have just been learned
- Suggestions for supplemental materials that relate to the student's daily life

- Textbooks and materials that are not out of print
- Reasonable cost
- A means of ongoing evaluation: chapter reviews; check-ups or tests; review in subsequent books; tier-based approach
- Sensitivity to the need for an alternative approach for students who did not succeed in a traditional school system; these students, for example, often work well one-on-one

Once curriculum bases are covered, the next step is to enhance the student's retention and comprehension capabilities with supplemental reading and writing lessons drawn from the student's daily life. For example, an early lesson for the parent of a six-year-old could include sight words and writing practice for completing a school absentee excuse. An early lesson for a student seeking employment could include sight words and writing practice relevant to completing a job application.

More advanced students might be interested in supplemental books on money management, child care and other topics.

The daily living skills your program teaches will be appreciated by other community groups. Employment service agencies will find it easier to place a job applicant who has no trouble filling out forms, for example, and parents who understand school forms can ease the burden on local schools. Agencies which have seen what you can do for them will be more likely to refer students to your program.

There are other ways to draw the community in to this aspect of your program. A local library can provide supplemental reading materials. Public schools can cooperate with enhanced parent-teacher-child interaction. Employment services can supply sample job applications. And newspapers may be willing to donate free papers

for teaching: students can learn how to read the want ads and how to find information about children's story hours, free immunization clinic locations and other community programs and events.

While students are meeting with volunteer tutors they can also benefit from small supplemental classes in groups of 4 to 10. Subjects like writing, spelling, social studies and math can improve their information base and strengthen their understanding of basic skills. You may find professional teachers who would like to volunteer to conduct these mini-classes; the classroom experience can ease students' transitions from one-on-one instruction into adult basic education, pre-GED and GED programs.

No matter what instruction program you undertake, it should be clear to students and tutors what short- and long-term goals they can expect to achieve, and in what time frame. Given realistic expectations, tutoring can be a positive experience for both student and tutor.

MONEY MATTERS

Budgeting

Your program will need to take into consideration several budget areas, and then decide what will be real, out-of-pocket costs and what might be handled by volunteers or in-kind contributions. Line items to consider include:

- Administrative salaries
- Supervisory staff salaries
- Instructional salaries (teachers, trainers)
- Guidance and counseling salaries (professional testing, assessment)
- Secretarial salaries
- Fringe benefit packages
- Textbooks and materials
- Audio-visual equipment
- Rental or purchase of other equipment
- Facilities
- Telephone
- Travel
- Mail/copier costs
- Miscellaneous (awards, plaques, annual banquet, etc.)

One note on instructional materials: a policy should be determined about who should pay for books. In some cases, literacy programs are able to underwrite the total cost of materials; other programs ask tutors to fund materials; and still other programs ask students to pay a small registration fee.

Include in the budget process an accurate record of in-kind contributions. This can be important when a grant mandates a "match" — that means a percentage of grant monies must be provided, or "matched" by the grantee. In-kind contributions are often allowed to count toward the match. Consider the following when tracking in-kind contributions:

- What would it cost per month to rent office and classroom space now made available at no cost by the library, church, community center or school?

- Total the number of hours volunteer tutors work with students each year and multiply the number of hours by the amount it would cost you to pay a part-time teacher's aide.
- Be aware of the number of hours counselors, teachers, accountants, public relations managers and other professionals donate each year. Multiply those hours by the hourly rate you might have been charged.

If your agency does not have non-profit status, it may be advisable to affiliate with an existing agency and use it as the fiscal agent for your program. You can also operate under that agency's non-profit status. (If you decide not to go this route, check with a local lawyer about the advisability of applying for non-profit status.)

Fundraising

Establishing a secure financial base for a literacy program can be one of the most challenging, but also one of the most intimidating responsibilities you encounter. Directors of small literacy programs are usually expected to raise funds to operate their programs as well as to handle a long list of other duties. Many of them have no experience in fundraising, and may have to overcome an attitude that says "it is not polite to ask."

Fundraising does not have to be frightening. The most important skills you bring to this endeavor are your common sense, your knowledge of the needs of your local program and your willingness to work hard and learn from any mistakes you make.

Where to begin? Be aware of the resource people in your community who can help you. Ask your legislator's office to scan the Federal Register and alert you to any literacy grant opportunities. In addition, cultivate a working relationship with the grantwriters for local colleges, adult education programs, intermediate units, county government, vo-tech schools and others. They may be able to subcontract work to you, or at least give you helpful advice.

Elsewhere in the community, local county money may be available through block grants and other government sources. Small grants may be available from service clubs, church groups, United Way and others. Local foundations are another resource. Ask the library for a foundation directory and then be selective about which you approach; find those with relevant funding categories and a track record of funding programs similar to yours.

Adult education grants may be available through the State Department of Education, and if your program is affiliated with a library, through Library Service Construction Act grants. Another possibility is money allocated by the Job Training Partnership Act.

Keep in mind that different foundations and agencies have different grant requirements. Some ask for a brief request letter and budget. At the other end of the scale, some require an elaborate narrative, a detailed budget and monthly reporting. When you apply for a grant, be realistic about the time and effort that will be required to administer it.

Local businesses may respond to your program if you convince them of the tremendously positive results literacy programs have achieved in the workforce and in the community. Public relations officers in local industries are a good first contact. Other sources of information and advice may be your local banker's association, the Chamber of Commerce and United Way.

As with any activity your program undertakes, community involvement will make your grant proposal

stronger and win your program community support at the same time. The local agencies listed earlier in this booklet can provide you with statistics you can use to make your case. An educator can review your narrative to see that your plans are educationally sound. A banker or accountant can help you structure a budget. And anyone who has dealt with you can give you a support letter — the ABE director, the superintendent of schools, a representative of your local newspaper, your program's students and tutors, and others.

An excellent and inexpensive overview on grant-writing techniques is entitled, "Program Planning and Proposal Writing." It is available from its author, Norton J. Kiritz, Executive Director, The Grantsmanship Center, 1031 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90015.

Financial Procedures

From the moment a literacy program begins, accurate recordkeeping is essential. No program can afford sloppy recordkeeping, and careful financial reporting will give a clear indication of the health of the program.

Many programs receive grants from different sources, and every dollar must be tracked as it is spent. Two procedures will help: (1) be sure tutors, volunteers and staff keep timesheets and (2) log and code every money transaction. It is strongly advisable to have an accountant or financial officer help develop a budget system to give your program a clear audit trail. Below is an example of a simple chronological accounting form many programs find helpful:

TRANSACTION	ITEM	VENDOR	SOURCE	COST
1987	TABLES	Harvard Book	DOE	\$100
1988	"Funding for U.S. Community"	B. Dalton	ESL	\$25

You may also want to assign a department description code to each source of funding, and a transaction code to help track and categorize activities. For example:

M = Mental Health/Mental Retardation Contract
 P = PA Department of Education Contract
 J = Job Training Contract
 C = Contributions to Program
 D = Deposit
 R = Reimbursement to book account or petty cash
 W = Withdrawal from petty cash

Whatever system you set up should provide an easy, well-documented record of your transactions. A complete and updated finance report should be prepared monthly.

Another area that can be a source of problems for a literacy program is reporting grant money allocated to salaries. In many cases, percentages of many different grants are allocated to pay teachers and staff, although each teacher and staff member receives only one paycheck. If every paid worker keeps accurate time records—for instance, logging hours for an ESL class funded by the Department of Education separately from those for a class funded by JTPA — it will facilitate reporting back to the funders. Formal documentation should not include hours worked over and above the contract agreement for hours per week. Supplemental/ overtime income can then be cut on a separate check. Below is a timesheet which demonstrates a division of hours among funders:

EXAMPLE: N. Woods								
JANUARY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	etc.
Hrs. for MH/MR		2		1				
Hrs. for Vo-Tech		3						
Hrs. for JTPA		2	4		2			
Hrs. for DOE				4				
Hrs. for state literacy			3					
Hrs. for university				2	3			

As the literacy program moves forward, it will be necessary for the advisory board to evaluate it regularly at weekly, monthly or quarterly meetings. In evaluating the program, the board should ask, for instance:

- How well have we measured up to our objectives? If not well, why? Are our objectives realistic?
- Is what we are doing effective?
- Do we have a good student-tutor balance?
- What is our feedback from the students, tutors and community?
- Are the students really learning? How many begin the program, and, of those, how many complete it?
- Do we have a consistent volunteer structure?

Once a program is teaching effectively, three important initiatives will help it grow: student recruitment, tutor recruitment and public awareness.

RECRUITMENT

Student Recruitment

Social service agencies can be a major source of student referrals. Be certain that such agencies have information about your program, and work to make them sensitive to possible reading problems in their clients. (Tell them, for instance, that when clients cannot fill out forms, that may be a clue to illiteracy.) Some particularly appropriate agencies and professionals to contact include:

- Department of Labor office (JTPA)
- Welfare agencies
- Social Security office
- Local offices of employment services
- Prenatal clinics
- Ministerial association
- Local hospital and doctors
- Professional Secretaries Association chapter
- Local housing authority
- Head-Start parent councils
- Public school teachers
- Personnel directors

Encourage agency personnel to make the call to your literacy program for the client while they are face-to-face. Often people who are illiterate are reluctant to come forward for help. Professional support in making that critical first contact can actually put them in a literacy program.

Holding an annual open house for human service agencies can save you time and effort by exposing your program to many agencies simultaneously. At an open house, students and tutors, as well as staff, can interact with guests. Reading materials can be displayed and labeled, for example: "Employment Skills," "Driver's Education," "Early Childhood," "Science." At some point during the event, program staff can take time to describe the great benefits of improved literacy skills, then let guests browse through materials and "discover" the program in conversation with students, tutors and staff.

Additional methods to recruit students include placing booths at a local shopping mall; mounting exhibits with the garden club or other civic, community or social organizations; participating in free health screenings by testing for learning disabilities and reading level; and holding promotions through local stores — having them place flyers or bookmarks in grocery bags, for instance. Radio and TV public service spot campaigns are, of course, also very effective. Most non-readers have a support person, and in many cases it will be that person who will hear these promotional messages and encourage the non-reader to act.

In all cases, recruitment tactics for students should respect human dignity. Phrases like "come out and join those learning to read," or "brush up on your reading skills" allow adults to enter a program even though they are unwilling to admit they cannot read.

As students are referred to a literacy program, it is most important to complete a skills assessment and place each student as quickly as possible. The entry evaluation should determine the student's short- and long-range goals. It should also uncover any barriers to learning such as child care or transportation problems.

The evaluation process can begin with the first phone call. Following are some questions useful in a quick screening over the phone:

- What is the last grade you completed?
- What difficulties would you have if you wanted to read the newspaper?
- What problems would you have if I handed you a job application? Could you fill it out without any trouble? Would the spelling be okay?
- When do you need to read (on the road, in the kitchen, to children, for Bible study, etc.)?
- When do you have trouble reading something?
- What do you need from this program?
- What are your goals?
- What reading skills do you need today to make life more pleasant?
- Will you have any trouble getting to classes (with work schedule, child care, transportation, etc.)?

A first meeting, and a more formal evaluation, should be scheduled without delay. At that time, many programs administer an entrance level reading test and take the individual's case history. An interview, in addition to covering how the program operates and what the student can expect to learn, should also advise new students on what options they have if they are unhappy with the program. If handled properly, this is the meeting which can lay the groundwork for student pride in the program. Ask students to find a way to give something back — refer another student, accept a speaking engagement, write a support letter.

Once all the information about a student has been gathered, the literacy program can design, with the student, an individual action plan. It must be made clear to students that attendance is part of their responsibility; if they must miss a week, they should notify their tutor that they will be unable to attend, and the tutor should report the absence to the program office. If absenteeism continues, students should be temporarily dropped from the program and should return only when they are able to meet their commitment.

Confidentiality is important to most adult learners, especially in the beginning. Later it is rewarding to see how fear of disclosure turns to pride in learning. A program should take care that no test score is released without the permission of the student; a further precaution is to let the student deliver the information to the person who asked for it.

Recruiting Tutors

A media campaign is an effective way to recruit tutors. Media coverage should highlight your need for tutors, areas where volunteers are most needed, dates scheduled for training workshops and requirements for volunteers.

Another effective strategy is to speak to community groups. Target groups include:

- Men's and women's professional organizations—Federated Women's Clubs, Professional Secretaries Association, Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis and others
- Religious groups of all denominations. Also include the ministerial association, men's and women's groups and others
- Professional educators' organizations such as the National Retired Teachers Association, Delta Kappa Gamma, American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the International Reading Association
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and other senior citizen groups
- Local volunteer clearinghouse information and referral service or United Way
- Parent-teacher associations or organizations
- Garden clubs
- Boards of the Intermediate Unit, community colleges and universities

Once tutors begin teaching, it requires special effort from literacy program headquarters to keep them encouraged and enthusiastic. Below are some "tutor needs" that are wise to keep in mind:

- **Tutors need a sense of the broader picture.** Even though a tutor is dealing with only one student, it will help tutors to know that the student fits into a total program, and that the program fits into a national movement.
- **Tutors need a complete picture of the students assigned to them.** At what reading level is the student? What level does the student hope to reach? What are the student's special interests and needs?
- **Tutors need to know that they are not required to "stick to the book,"** but are encouraged to use common sense and imagination to find supplemental materials to meet a student's needs.

PROMOTION

- **Tutors need to see their role in the educational growth of their students.** How will learning to read affect each student's life?
- **Tutors need a job description with clearly defined expectations, especially regarding time.**
- **Tutors need to be informed about procedures:** how to order books, how to keep records, where to go with problems, how to handle an emergency, holiday schedules at classroom sites, etc.
- **Tutors need a staff that keeps in touch.** It is important to communicate concern and support and to share reports about other activities and people in the program.
- **Tutors need recognition.**

A good student-tutor ratio and geographic balance are cornerstones of a successful literacy program. Obviously, a program should not train 150 volunteers if it has only 50 students. And, if it has 150 students and 50 volunteers, it should make a special effort to recruit more tutors. No one wants to wait.

It is important to focus recruitment so that your program reflects community need. If you are speaking in a community where you know you have students waiting for tutors, try to recruit tutors with your speech. If you are speaking in a community which has tutors waiting for students, and students waiting in outlying communities, try to encourage tutors to travel to students a little farther from home.

Public Awareness

Public awareness of a literacy program begins with its leadership. The public needs to know that you are knowledgeable about adult illiteracy. And once you have an established program, the community needs to see its positive track record.

Two internal ingredients are vital to a successful public relations program:

- Good rapport among members of the program staff, both paid and volunteer. The public will respond in a positive manner to confidence, pride and cohesiveness on the part of the literacy team.
- Word-of-mouth evaluation of the program by students, tutors, staff and others who observe its day-to-day activities. The grapevine has a powerful impact on how the community perceives literacy efforts.

Once a literacy program's own house is in order, it can begin to talk with the community. A speakers bureau is an effective vehicle for community relations. Presentations allow program executives to raise awareness both about literacy issues and about how your program addresses them. Speeches can also be effective for recruiting volunteers, developing sources for student referrals and enlisting financial aid and in-kind services. Staff and advisory board members are logical choices for a speakers bureau, but also consider involving students and tutors — they can be most effective speakers.

A speaker needs to take into account the way the community perceives illiteracy; often, the community attaches a stigma to the person who cannot read. An effective way to begin, for example, is to tell the audience that an adult who is illiterate is just like you or me, except that he or she cannot read. Those in the audience — your argument continues — are not diminished because they are not able to play professional sports or expertly repair a car. But adults who are illiterate may be able to do these and other

things the audience cannot. The skill they lack is reading. Another approach is to invite audience members to picture in their minds an adult who is illiterate. Then describe some of your program's students to discredit the stereotype.

Teachers in the audience sometimes feel "blamed," and believe people think illiteracy exists because "the schools are doing a bad job." Yet records show that the majority of those who cannot read never learned for reasons unrelated to formal teaching. Adult students may have had a great deal of absenteeism in early grades, or perhaps their families moved several times at critical learning points. As children, they may have experienced traumas like alcoholism in the family, abuse or divorce — or they may have had undetected problems with hearing or vision. Some were simply not ready to learn at the time the information was presented.

If, at the end of his or her remarks, a speaker has convinced the audience that education is something to be proud of — for adults as well as children — then the public will have come one step further toward not just seeing your program but also viewing education as a community need.

It is important for speakers to be trained and prepared for presentations. A speaker's kit could include:

- An outline or script the speaker may choose to follow
- A brief history of the literacy program
- An overview of state and national literacy activities
- Statistics and facts about illiteracy, along with the source of the data
- Information about local program needs — for instance, recruitment of students and tutors, financial assistance, in-kind contributions, and equipment — and tips for the speaker to use in asking the audience to help fill those needs

- Information on what a literacy program costs: all books for one student, telephone for one year, newsletter for one year, etc.
- Handouts, such as brochures or fact sheets
- Dates and times for upcoming events — for example, an open house or training workshops
- Sign-up sheets for those who would like to volunteer
- Several of the director's business cards for anyone requesting further information
- A brief report sheet, for the office's records, to include the name of the organization spoken to, the location, date and time of the meeting; the approximate attendance; the contact person (name, address and phone); the name of the speaker; and the results of or comments about the presentation
- A thank-you note from your program that the speaker can sign and mail

Additional resources for speakers could include a brief slide show or videotape about literacy as well as charts, posters and sensitivity activities. In participating in Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) many public television (PBS) and ABC stations have developed very effective news features and public service announcements (PSAs) about adult illiteracy. Contact the PLUS coordinators at your local stations to see if a videotape is available.

Directories of available speakers are prepared by many local libraries, United Way offices, Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations. Request that your organization be included in future editions.

Talking to the Media

The media in your community are a vital link to public awareness. To avoid confusion or duplication of requests, one person from your program should be designated as the press contact. That person should take time to establish personal contact with public affairs officers and reporters at local television, radio and cable stations and at local newspapers.

A program media kit will be a valuable resource. Once a supply of kits has been produced, a cover letter, additional press releases and/or details of a special event can be easily added. A good media kit should include:

- A history of your program
- An overview of your program's accomplishments
- Highlights of current activities
- Information on upcoming events
- Annual dates such as national literacy week, adult education month, your annual dinner, etc.
- Student stories (Use with their permission.)
- Black-and-white photos of program activities (Be certain you have release forms from the people pictured before you issue the photographs.)
- Statistics on literacy. Have your program's press contact keep on hand a current compilation of literacy books, articles, statistics and other references and resources as well as a list of students, tutors and board members who have agreed to be interviewed.

Following are some additional tips for the press contact:

- Develop an accurate and current media mailing list. Include appropriate departments, contact names and titles, and phone numbers for reference.
- Be aware of deadlines for submission.
- Be brief and direct. Keep the message clear and simple.

- Be aware of the value of human-interest stories. Respect confidentiality at the same time you let the audience or readers see the unique experiences of your students and tutors.
- Be adaptable so the message appeals to the target audience.
- Request guidelines on how submissions should be prepared (double-spaced, 1/2-inch margins, contact person's name and phone number at top, etc.).
- Include information about your sponsoring organization; your address, phone number and contact person; the title and description of any event, its date, time, location and cost; requirements for enrollment; RSVP information; and other relevant data.
- Make requests at reasonable intervals and only when you have something of special interest to the public.

One of the most effective means of publicity is the television and radio public service announcement (PSA). These are sometimes referred to as "commercials" for non-profit organizations. PSAs range from brief announcements to highly produced spots. They run at the discretion of the broadcaster.

If you would like to develop a PSA, first make certain that local television and radio stations run PSAs, and ask what "format" each station prefers. (Some want just scripts, and others want different kinds of video and audio tapes.) A station may even offer to produce a PSA for you, and may share it with other stations in your area. But if you need to develop your own PSA, you can make an appointment with the audio-visual department of your intermediate unit, college, university or vo-tech school to see if it might produce your PSA. You should also check with local advertising agencies and public relations firms in your community; one of them might be willing to donate an entire public awareness campaign, including a PSA, for your program.

TRAINING

A literacy program is only as good as its staff and volunteers; this makes good training critical. Most programs find it convenient to train volunteers in a workshop setting. The training workshop brings another benefit, too: it helps to build friendship and cohesiveness among volunteers.

Once tutors leave a training session and are matched with students, they are more or less "on their own." Therefore, training workshops should be as complete as possible, and should include:

- An introduction to the reading materials which your program will use
- An operational overview:
 - the location of tutoring sites and a contact person for each site;
 - staff person to contact if problems arise;
 - how to obtain materials and texts;
 - reporting procedures;
 - hours in preparation;
 - hours teaching;
 - student profile
- Community resources available to supplement tutoring:
 - role of the library;
 - role of the local schools;
 - role of the religious community
- Literacy issues, nationally and locally:
 - how the program interfaces with other educational opportunities
- Sensitivity training:
 - understanding adult students;
 - how to realize a student's individual goals;
 - procedures for addressing problems;
 - suggestions for a positive approach to learning (Tutors are not feeding students wisdom, but rather encouraging them to develop their own minds.)

- The educational process:
 - student entry evaluation;
 - ongoing evaluation and recordkeeping procedures;
 - how to integrate the student's need and interests into the curriculum and lesson plans;
 - supplemental classes available

Some time in the workshop should be spent talking about volunteer skills other than tutoring. Volunteers can serve in many different capacities, including:

- Teaching crafts
- Teaching small classes
- Doing specialized testing
- As office help
- In fund development
- On speakers bureaus
- Computer assistance
- In recruitment and outreach
- On the newsletter team

There are trainers affiliated with specific literacy organizations (Laubach Literacy Action, Literacy Volunteers of America and others) whose skills may be utilized, and/or you may want to involve local teachers and reading specialists. It is also possible to develop a unique training program with advice from groups like the American Society for Training and Development.

Ideally, training workshops are supplemented with in-service training. Staff, tutors, students or circumstances may suggest topics for these sessions: in a high unemployment area, for example, it may be important to hold a session on how to teach someone to fill out a job application form. Tutors in communities with non-English-speaking citizens may need an ESL class. Another class might demonstrate how to help a young parent help children learn to read. Spelling and grammar may be other concerns.

HORIZONS

An adult literacy program is much, much more than student books and teacher's manuals. As literacy enters the list of "top 10" social concerns in the eyes of the public, it will become the priority it deserves to be. In that climate, a program which is sensitive to students, volunteers and community alike can win support and move the cause of literacy forward.

An adult literacy program is also much, much more than a program. It is a community gift of concern and sharing which can transform the lives of those it serves. For every literacy student who earns a high school degree or a college diploma, for every student who holds a new job or who can read a children's story or study the Bible — that program has opened up a whole new world.

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SAMPLE FORMS

**SERVICES PROVIDED BY:
ADULT LITERACY ACTION
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
BEAVER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

... BASIC LITERACY

Adults requesting help to improve their basic reading and writing skills are matched with Laubach certified trained volunteers. One-to-one free tutoring takes place in all ten Beaver County libraries.

... BASIC MATH

Adults requesting help to improve their basic math skills may enroll in this free class. The class is taught by a math teacher, and meets one evening a week from 6:00-8:00 P.M.

... ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE

Adults requesting help to learn to read, write, and converse in the English language may enroll in free classes.

... CITIZENSHIP PREPARATION

Adults requesting help to prepare for the United States naturalization test may enroll in this ten-week class offered three times a year.

... MENTAL HEALTH/MENTAL RETARDATION

Adults needing special help to learn and improve basic reading skills may be eligible for this program. The classes are taught by Laubach certified trained volunteers in cooperation with a certified teacher. Tutoring takes place at several MH/MR sites in Beaver County.

... JAIL-BASED LITERACY

Basic literacy classes are offered at the Beaver County Jail. One-to-one tutoring is continued after release in cooperation with the probation office.

... EMPLOYMENT SKILLS CLASSES

Eligible participants are referred to this 15-week course to increase their employment potential through basic language arts and employment skills classes.

... PARENT LITERACY

Chapter I parents who have trouble with basic reading, writing and math skills may enroll in literacy classes designed to create awareness of the needs of their children to help prevent second- and third-generation illiteracy in their families.

... GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES

Senior citizens requesting help in meeting basic reading and writing needs relevant to their changing roles in the community can enroll in this class offered twice a year.

... INDUSTRIAL LITERACY

Awareness of basic literacy needs of employees is developed in cooperation with Beaver County industries.

... SPELLING AND WRITING CLASS

In an agreed upon number of two-hour sessions, the student will be introduced to phonics blends, word families, syllabication and other essentials necessary for the development of basic spelling skills. Practice in writing sentences, paragraphs, notes and other vital communications will be introduced.

... MATH CLASS

The students will be introduced to operations of math skills necessary for daily living, business, trades and work-related problems, and to develop comprehension and reasoning powers through visual and practical application.

... NEWSPAPER CLASS

This course is designed to use the newspaper as a text for students developing basic reading skills.

... SCIENCE CLASS

Introduce basic reading, vocabulary and interpretation skills, and provide skills in preparation for entry into GED classes.

... SAFETY AND FIRST AID CLASS

The students will be provided with basic information about general first aid, home safety rules and precautions, and emergency procedures.

... HEALTH, HYGIENE AND NUTRITION CLASS

Introduces basic reading and vocabulary skills relevant to understanding the body and how it works, the basics of good health, and health care services available in the community.

... DRIVER'S EDUCATION THEORY CLASS

Focuses on vocabulary, explanation and study of driving rules, signs, road markings, signals and practice for the question section of the driver's exam.

... GRAMMAR AND LOGIC CLASS

Provides instruction for students nearing completion of literacy program and preparing to enter GED classes.

... SPEECH AND COMMUNICATIONS CLASS

An introduction to verbal development, self-expression, and articulate and sensitive oral presentation skills needed in daily life such as phone, interview, job and social interaction etiquette.

... SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS

Introduce basic vocabulary, reading and interpretation skills relevant to preparation for entry into the GED program.

STUDENT INITIAL REFERRAL FORM

STUDENT NO. _____
 DATE _____
 NAME _____ PHONE NO. _____
 or HOW TO REACH _____ S.S. # _____
 ADDRESS _____ COUNTY _____

Referred by: _____

How did you hear about us? _____

Age _____ Marital status _____ Children at home _____

School grade completed _____ Where _____

Employed _____ Occupation _____

Time available _____ Flexible or Fixed _____

Can travel to tutor _____ Most convenient library or learning center _____

Why does he/she want to learn to read and write? _____

Immediate need _____

Call taken by: _____

Test Date—ABLE _____ Other—Date _____

MATCHING—Tutor Name & Co.	Date	Reason Discontinued	Date
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1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

STUDENT INTAKE FORM

1. INITIAL

Phone: Name, Address, Phone, SS#, Age _____

Last grade completed _____; Where _____;

Immediate needs _____; Goal _____.

If ESL first name, last name, country, length of time in U.S. _____

If needed, sponsor's name and phone number _____

Set date and location for screening, copy of info sent to tester _____

2. INTAKE FORM—STUDENT PROFILE REPORT

Examiner's name _____ test date _____ student # _____

Referred by _____ on date _____ male _____ female _____

ESL _____ basic _____ GED _____ MH/MR _____ LD _____ Other _____

This student has been referred to: _____

Reasons for Registration

_____to read & comprehend better

_____to prepare for the GED

_____to help a child/children

_____to spell & write better

_____to help with job search

_____other _____

Reasons for Departure

_____met student's expectations

_____completed materials

_____pursued next level

_____interrupted by illness

_____lack of interest

_____moved from area

_____no reasons given

_____other _____

Reasons for Re-entry

_____change in personal
circumstance

_____continued need

_____other _____

DATA CLOSURE

_____received GED

_____completed higher level of education, specify _____

_____other relevant details of the student's profile include: _____

3. INTERVIEW

When did you first decide you had a reading problem? _____

Why did you decide to come for help? _____

1. When do you need to read?

- _____ at home
- _____ on the job
- _____ on the road
- _____ shopping
- _____ church
- _____ other

2. When do you have trouble reading something?

- _____ at home
- _____ on the job
- _____ on the road
- _____ shopping
- _____ church
- _____ other

3. How do you think someone could help with what you need to read/write?

- _____ at home
- _____ on the job
- _____ on the road
- _____ shopping
- _____ church
- _____ other

What are your educational goals? _____

What will help you feel personal success? _____

What barriers might slow you down?

- _____ child care
- _____ transportation
- _____ work shifts
- _____ physical
- _____ money

TUTOR DATA SHEET

NAME _____ NAME OF HUSBAND
OR WIFE _____

ADDRESS _____
Street City State Zip

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT _____ WORK HOURS _____

Where did you hear about the program? _____

Preferred time for tutoring: Morn. _____ Aft. _____ Eve. _____ Weekend _____

Preferred days for tutoring: _____

To meet with a student:

Do you have access to a car? Yes _____ No _____

Are you near public transportation? Yes _____ No _____

Most convenient library _____

Special Skills or Interests _____ Area or Field of Work Experience _____

Languages (other than English) that you speak _____ or read _____

Age (optional) Circle one: Under 25; 25-35; 36-45; 46-55; 56-65; 65+

Your education (Circle last year completed): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

College: 1 2 3 4; Grad. School: 1 2 3 4 Degree _____ Other _____

Other Schooling: _____

Can you volunteer in any of these areas? Please check which ones.

____ Typing

____ Phoning

____ Fundraising

____ Bookkeeping

____ Public speaking

____ Becoming a tutor-trainer

____ Office/clerical

____ Publicity

____ Hostess for workshop

____ Mimeo/copier machine

____ Newsletter

____ Baking

____ Other: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Certification (give mo./yr.) Date of placement and name(s) of student(s)

T-L _____ T-E _____

ST-L _____ ST-E _____

MT _____ MT-E _____

This booklet has been excerpted from "Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) Information and Resources for Task Forces" a manual for PLUS Task Forces funded by the **National Commission for Employment Policy.**

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